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Bush Vows to Shun Politics if Confirmed as CIA Chief

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WASHINGTON—George Bush promised Monday to stay out of politics if confirmed as director of the Central Intelligence Agency, but he refused to rule out acceptance of the vice-presidential nomination if it were offered.

"To my knowledge, no one in the history of this Republic has ever been asked to renounce his political birthright as the price of confirmation for any office," Bush, formerly both a congressman and Republican national chairman, told the Senate Armed Services Committee.

Testifying at confirmation hearings on his nomination to succeed William E. Colby as CIA director, Bush deplored recently disclosed CIA abuses. He called them "outrageous and morally offensive" and said that "they must not be repeated."

Under questioning, Bush also said that he would resign rather than carry out an order to assassinate a foreign leader. But he refused to rule out any future CIA involvement in

the overthrow of a foreign government.

"I can't tell you that there never would be any support for a coup d'etat," Bush said. He took a similar position on CIA involvement in paramilitary operations against another country.

It is Bush's political background that has generated most of the opposition to his nomination as the nation's most sensitive intelligence official in the light of disclosures of CIA involvement in domestic spying.

In addition to heading the Republican National Committee during the closing days of the Nixon administration, he was a two-term Republican House member from Texas and an unsuccessful GOP candidate for the Senate. He also served as U.S. ambassador to the United Nations and most recently as chief of the U.S. liaison office in China.

Because of Bush's political background, some Republicans includ-

ing one of President Ford's closest Senate allies who did so off the record—have questioned the wisdom of the nomination and have said that he should renounce political ambitions as a condition of confirmation.

But Bush's refusal to do so did not appear to bother most members of the Senate committee. The half day of generally friendly questioning by the committee strongly suggested that Bush would win committee approval by a substantial margin, possibly today.

Sen. Frank Church (D-Ida.), chairman of the Senate Select Committee on U.S. Intelligence Activities, will testify against the Bush nomination today but it appeared unlikely that he would affect the outcome.

"It looks like he will be confirmed by a lopsided margin," said Sen. Patrick J. Leahy (D-Vt.), who with Sen. Gary Hart (D-Colo.) subjected Bush to the most critical questioning.

Hart asked Bush if his political background did not establish a precedent for CIA nominations.

"I would appeal to you to not base your vote on appearances but on the basis of qualifications," Bush replied. He said that the key question is whether he has "the character and integrity to do the job and I hope you find I have."

"I didn't seek this job," Bush said at another point. "I was riding my bicycle home from church in Peking when the message came offering me the job."

He said he accepted after considerable reflection.

Bush ducked a direct response when questioned about current CIA assistance to anti-Soviet factions in the Angola civil war. He said he was not acquainted with the details of the Angola situation and "I simply don't know."

Bush termed assassinations of foreign leaders "morally offensive" and said that he would resign rather than comply with an assassination order.